

Real

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Summary:

Richie doesn't feel real, so Eddie reminds him that he is.

Real

Author's Note:

Sooo...
catch me on Tumblr @greywatertrashmouth
Hope y'all like this :')

It was 2am and Richie couldn't take it anymore.

He couldn't stay in that house any fucking longer because he was sure if he did, his whole existence would shatter and fade into

(nothing.)

thin air, getting smaller and smaller, farther and farther away until there was nothing left of him.

He smoked one cigarette after another

(a grand total of three before he reached his destination)

as he walked. He didn't really know where he was going, but his feet led him in a familiar direction; a direction he'd gone far too many times before.

Maybe he shouldn't, his mind tried to reason. Eddie wouldn't be awake now; there's no way. He wouldn't want to wake him up just to deal with Richie's problems like he'd done so many times before.

Eddie had never given him any reason to think that he didn't care. No, quite the opposite. Every time Richie came tapping at his window, Eddie would open it and give him all the love and attention he needed at that moment. Sometimes that meant a whole lot and sometimes it meant none at all.

Eddie just *knew*, and Richie never questioned it.

The climb up to Eddie's window came almost naturally to him. The window was already cracked, so he simply pushed it open the rest of the way and stepped in, stumbling over the ledge when he tried to

step over with his second foot.

“Jesus,” he grumbled, catching himself before he fell. He stood up straight, his eyes immediately catching Eddie’s. “Sorry. Shit -- sorry, were you asleep?”

Eddie blinked once, twice, three times, then lifted his hands to rub the sleep from his eyes.

“No,” he lied, then thought better of it. “Yes. But that’s okay. You look like shit.”

Richie scoffed, fighting back the small smile that threatened to appear.

“What a charmer,” he said, kicking off his shoes and climbing into Eddie’s bed as if it were his own. He and Eddie fell into a familiar position

(Eddie with his back against the headboard and Richie with his head in Eddie’s lap, one arm draped over his legs)

with a soft sigh.

Silence.

Longer than their usual silence when Richie came by unannounced, and he supposed Eddie was waiting for him to explain.

Problem was, Richie wasn’t sure how to explain it.

“Are you alright?” Eddie asked, wrapping one of Richie’s curls around his finger and tugging gently. Richie’s eyes fluttered closed, and he tried to focus on that feeling instead of the emptiness that filled his chest.

He didn’t answer for many minutes. He laid there and let Eddie play with his hair, knowing that he was worrying the boy above him and hating himself for it. He knew part of his deserved the pain he was feeling, but Eddie didn’t deserve the worry Richie caused him.

“Yes,” he whispered, then sniffled once

(damn his emotions getting in the way)

and sighed because he knew Eddie knew better.

Eddie always knew.

“No,” he whispered next, not daring to open his eyes. “Shit.” He lifted one of his hands to rub at his eyes, fighting back the tears that were right there -- right there beneath his eyelids, waiting to fall.

It was too late.

“Shit,” Eddie repeated under his breath. As many times as Richie had come to him during the night, he’d very rarely cried. Actually, now that he was thinking about it, Eddie can’t recall the last time he’d seen Richie cry.

“Jesus, Eds,” Richie huffed, moving his hands and slowly turning his head to look up at Eddie. His eyes were bloodshot and he looked so emotionally wrecked that Eddie’s breath caught in his throat. “Am I - Am I real?” He asked, his voice cracking on the last word

(real)

which only made Eddie want to cry too. But that was the least of his worries at the moment. His best friend -- the strongest of the two of them -- was crying in his lap and he didn’t know what the fuck he was talking about.

“What?” Eddie asked, not totally sure what was happening.

“Real,” Richie repeated, sitting up to face Eddie now. “Am I real?”

“Of course you’re real, Rich, what do you mean?” Eddie asked. His heart was beating fast in his chest and he reached out with both hands to hold both of Richie’s, his thumbs brushing over his knuckles.

“My mom,” Richie started, shaking his head and looking down, finally breaking eye contact with Eddie. “I hear her sometimes. Talking to Noah, but - but then when she’s around me, she - doesn’t even look at me. Doesn’t say a word. It’s like I’m not even there.”

Eddie's heart broke, but he didn't say anything because he could tell Richie wasn't done. "Not a fucking sound," he whispered, glaring down at their hands as his started to shake slightly. Eddie squeezed gently as a reminder that he was there. "I just feel like I'm not -"

(real)

"- real anymore."

Eddie looked down at their hands, then took one of Richie's between both of his and lifted it to his lips. Once there, he pressed a kiss to each of his knuckles, then set it back down and moved only one of his hands to Richie's cheek.

"Look at me," he whispered, and he didn't speak again until Richie was looking at him. "You're real. You're right here, in my room, at 2:57am." He brushed away a tear with his thumb. "I see you. Do you hear me? *I see you*, Richie." A pause. "I see you, and I love you."

He leaned forward and pressed a kiss to Richie's forehead. He heard a snuffle, so he shifted them so that they were both laying down and Richie's head was tucked beneath Eddie's.

He let Richie calm down, brushing his fingers through his curls. He combed out any tangles, occasionally whispering in his ear -- another "I love you," usually -- and once Richie had finally stopped crying, he spoke again.

"Love you too, Eddie Spaghetti," he said, no doubt trying to lighten the mood with the playful little nickname.

Eddie smiled and didn't correct him.

"Go to sleep, Trashmouth."

"I love it when you get bossy."